

Nadel rolls out design studio to prop up sagging retail sector

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Ryan Weller.

Nadel Architecture has launched a design studio to work help retail fund managers, investors, developers and owners incorporate innovative strategies and layouts into their properties as the US starts to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. **Ryan Weller**, a longtime retail real estate specialist, will head the Direct-to-Retailer design studio as its director.

“This is the perfect time for us to expand our retail capabilities, particularly given the current environment in which we believe we will begin to see significant innovation,” said **Grey Lyon**, a partner and the retail design director at the Los Angeles-based firm. Nadel believes the strategy will position it for long-term growth and the ability to adapt its existing services for today’s world.

The studio also comes at a time when real estate fund managers are tapping into architecture companies to design destination-retail properties with modern, technology-driven amenities. An example is **Convergent Capital Group**, which believes there’s a huge opportunity to rethink retail centers as the US begin to emerge out of the Covid-19 crisis.

Nadel is looking to be at the forefront of what it hopes will be a retail renaissance. But first, the company will start with helping retailers adjust their storefronts to a post-Covid environment and make the necessary improvements to make shoppers feel safe, Weller told *REFI US*.

“Some of the strategies we may propose include natural daylighting and activation of outdoor spaces, improved customer queuing and well-defined paths of travel,” he added. “We’ll also suggest fundamental changes to HVAC design by improving the volume of air exchange, air filtration and dedicated zone air distribution.”

In the near term and long term, Nadel expects to see a retail renaissance, similar to the one that occurred post-2008, giving way to new retail concepts such as **Lululemon** and **Apple's** rebranding, shared Weller.

“The Direct-to-Retailer design studio [will] further Nadel’s involvement in the social engagement and experiential components of retail development by providing a more panoptic approach to retail expansion and brand evolution,” he continued.

For now, the nearly 50-year-old architecture firm is seeing a demand for niche retail rollout programs, as well as brands that are just entering the market, even as the current pandemic continue to put big box retailers out of business. Nadel aims to help those clients.

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